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Southern Baptists aid Bosnian Christians

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (BP) — Norman and Diane Crisp have seen many changes in Sarajevo and all of Bosnia-Herzegovina during the past two years.

They have seen a city being rebuilt. In some instances they helped in the effort as they hosted and worked alongside volunteer construction teams from Kentucky.

The Southern Baptist efforts have been well received by the nationals, with one Bosnian man telling Norman, "Muslims build mosques and Baptists put roofs on our houses."

They have seen a mission family come together as Southern Baptist personnel in the country grew from less than 10 to more than 40. They have seen the work move from humanitarian aid-based to church planting-based. Southern Baptist work in the country is only four years old.

Most importantly, they have seen Bosnians become believers in Jesus Christ. (Christian is not a term used in Bosnia because of political connotations.)

Norman, a retired pastor of 40 years, baptized two young men last summer. Both have become strong leaders in the work. One of them recently baptized another new believer.

The Crisps, of Longview, Texas, have served as on-site volunteer coordinators for the two-year Woman's Missionary Union-International Mission Board (WMU-IMB) partnership in Bosnia.

The Woman's Missionary Union is an auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), and the International Mission Board (formerly the Foreign Mission Board) is the SBC's missionary-sending agency.

The retired couple finished their assignment and returned to the States July 17. The WMU-IMB partnership officially ends Sept. 30.

"I thank the Lord that he gave us this opportunity," said Norman a few days before finishing his assignment in Sarajevo.



ON MISSION — Diane and Norman Crisp of Longview, Texas, spent two years in Sarajevo, Bosnia, as volunteer coordinators for the WMU-IMB partnership. (BP photo by Teresa Dickens)

"He equipped us for the assignment so all the glory goes to him."

"We've enjoyed it," he continued. "It has been hectic at times, but anything worthwhile has its stress points. We have met people from all over the world through the volunteers and the United Nations personnel who have attended our Sunday morning worship services. I would do it over again."

Diane agreed. "It is amazing how the Lord validates our gifts by showing us that he has called us to a place for an appointed

time. We didn't have any idea what would be required of us when we arrived two years ago, but God has used Norman's pastoral background and my counseling career to meet many needs here.

"The people have been wonderful — the nationals, IMB personnel, and volunteers," she added. "We have had wonderful, enriching relationships with them. They have been just like family."

Norman highlighted the changes that the couple has seen, concluding, "We leave here on a high note and feel like we have contributed our part."

The Crisps are especially pleased that new volunteer coordinators have been assigned to Bosnia. Bob and Pat Barnes of Nashville, Tenn., are scheduled to arrive in September.

"It is great to know that we are not leaving the mission family in a lurch," said Diane. "It is also an affirmation that our time is complete here."

The couple strongly encourages others to consider long-term missions volunteer opportunities.

"I would encourage anyone who is retirement age and in good health to consider being a long-term missions volunteer," Diane said. "It will be an experience of a lifetime, one that is very stretching and enriching."

The couple identified three things that are needed to be a successful missions volunteer: flexibility; no preconceived ideas and people skills.

"You have to be able to work with different kinds of people," Norman said, noting that the goal is to have a good experience with all of them.

"There is life after retirement," Norman concluded. "You can find purpose, meaning, and satisfaction in the here and now. Too many people retire and let go of life. You have to plan to be useful."

For volunteer missions opportunities, contact Delane Tew at WMU, (205) 991-4097 or the IMB volunteer office at (800) 999-3113.

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Miss. CP in summer slump

Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP) gifts to the work of the Lord for the month of July in the amount of \$1,848,402, reflected the summer slump that is generally experienced by many churches and state conventions around this time of year, according to Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson. The July 2000 CP total was \$565,329, or 23.42% less than the \$2,413,731 given in the month of June 2000, and \$447,232, or 19.48% less than the amount given in the same period last year. However, CP gifts for the current fiscal year are \$120,176, or .73%, ahead of last year's pace. To date, five of the seven months in the current fiscal year have seen CP gifts top \$2.4 million. April and July have been the exceptions, and only five of the past 26 months have seen CP dip below the \$2 million mark. CP gifts to date in the current fiscal year, which runs through December, total \$16,519,553. The CP budget as set by messengers to the 1999 Mississippi Baptist Convention is \$28,083,349.

Mississippi CP helps fund such activities as Missions Explosion at Camp Garaywa in Clinton on August 25-26; Senior Adult Regional Rallies across the state during the last week of August; and the Teaching Handbell Skills for Ringers seminar on August 26 at Trace Ridge Church, Ridgeland.

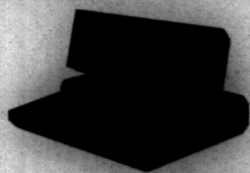
SBC CP up from last year

Total July receipts for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program (CP) and designated gifts were \$23,268,698.58, or 11.02% higher than July 1999's total of \$20,958,964.48, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention's executive committee. For July 2000, SBC CP gifts totaled \$14,568,580.61, or \$17,889.30 above July 1999's total of \$14,550,691.31. For the year to date, CP giving is 5.94% above the same period in the last Oct. 1-Sept. 30 fiscal year. At the end of July, a total of \$148,696,892.03 had been received, compared to last year's mark of \$140,363,173.74.

For the SBC CP Allocation Budget, the year-to-date receipts totaled \$148,696,892.03, or \$15,710,439.53 above the budgeted \$132,986,452.50. In designated gifts for July, \$8,700,117.97 was received, compared to July 1999's total of \$6,408,273.17, an increase of 35.76% or \$2,291,844.80. Designated gift totals for the year were reported at \$156,388,780.65 compared to the same period a year ago of \$145,327,832.75, an increase of 7.61% or \$11,060,947.90.

The SBC CP total includes receipts from individuals, churches, state conventions, and fellowships for distribution according to the 1999-2000 Cooperative Program Allocation Budget.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Enough is enough

There is a school principal in Mississippi who put his career on the line in the wee hours before school started last week.

Gathering in the eerie silence of the empty building that would soon be teeming with youngsters, the principal led the school's Christian teachers in a special prayer meeting for the upcoming school year. When they finished the prayer meeting, they went from classroom to classroom, praying for each child who would soon occupy the tiny desks and for each teacher who would enter those classrooms.

They may have been doing what was innately right (and acceptable in the not-too-distant past), but praying in a school in the year 2000 can bring upon such people of faith the crushing weight of the American government.

In a nation where even the mere whisper of religious words in public can bring condemnation from the highest court in the land and threats from civil liberties groups, these brave educators defied the earthly powers that would seek to rule them.

Like the early Christians who were forced by government persecution to meet in the dark catacombs of Rome, they placed their futures in the hands of God.

The penalties would have been severe had they been caught. Even now, their actions could have dire consequences if they are ever exposed. The enemies of our faith are, if anything, vigilant.

Why did they do it? Why did they risk a lawsuit or, worse still, being found in contempt of court and possible jail time? Why did they risk ostracization from their community of peers? Why did they risk the financial security of their families and even their own retirement?

They risked everything because enough is enough.

For more than four decades, Christians have watched as various courts and legislative bodies have chiseled away at religious freedom.

There was the removal of organized prayer in schools. There was the banning of any remotely religious Christmas display from public property.

There is the obvious continuing effort to eliminate religion from the political arena and from any other aspect of our public life in this country — especially if it can be labeled as Christian.

Dwayne Reynolds, a school board member from Chunky, has had enough. He wrote a letter to the editor of The Baptist Record after the U.S. Supreme Court recently struck down prayers before school athletic events.

"Now is the time for Christians to speak up, no matter where you attend a football game or other sporting event," Reynolds wrote. "Immediately following the playing of the National Anthem, before anything else is said, I invite you to stand and unite in the saying of the Lord's Prayer. Don't wait for anyone to tell you; just start when the National Anthem is complete."

It's an idea that's really catching fire in Mississippi. Independent of Reynolds' letter, Mississippi wildlife conservationist Paul Ott of Dixie Springs mentioned the same idea on Listen to the Eagle, his five-state Mississippi Network radio/television call-in show.

The studio's telephone console immediately lit up with callers who agreed with Ott. "We haven't been able to talk about hunting or fishing on the show since then," he said.

Ott, a member of First Church, Summit, has been so encouraged by the support he has received that he plans to start a nationwide campaign.

"TELL YOU WHAT LET'S DO, COACH — LET'S CHECK IT OUT WITH GOD'S GUIDELINES FIRST AND THEN, WE'LL WORRY ABOUT THE NCAA!"



For reasons too detailed to explain here, the first test of Ott's crusade will come when the Bogue Chitto High School football team plays St. Andrews of Jackson on August 25 in Bogue Chitto.

Ott wants to see as many Christians from across Mississippi as can come that evening to link hands and recite the Lord's Prayer after the National Anthem is played.

From there, "we hope it will happen everywhere and bring together black and white Christians, all denominations, even Republicans and Democrats. This could be a turning point," Ott said.

Imagine that — and all because, finally, we understand that enough is enough.

GUEST OPINION:

Don't give up on Japan

By Bruce Hill, member
First Church, Lexington

organizing group and the church began to grow.

By 1989, the mission church had approximately 30 members and an average attendance of 34, and was still meeting in a downtown office building. The average church in Japan has about 55 members.

On December 10, 1993, construction of a building that will seat 115 people was completed as the result of eight years' mission activity. The building and land cost was approximately three million U.S. dollars.

The 60-member congregation held a service on January 23, 1994 to dedicate the Chikushino-Futsukaichi



GROWING CONGREGATION — The membership of the Chikushino-Futsukaichi Christian Church has grown to 81 after starting as a mission effort in a home meeting 15 years ago. The church is the only Baptist church in the city of 90,000 people on the island of Kyushu. (BR special photo by Bruce Hill)

Christian Church. In 1997, the church was fully constituted.

When we arrived in Futsukaichi for the mid-week prayer meeting on June 22, 2000, we found the church has grown to 81 members and is almost debt free.

On June 25, the membership discussed and generally agreed to begin a new mission work in the Haruda area of Chikushino City, which now has an estimated population of 90,000.

The following Sunday, the membership agreed that the work will start no later than April 2001.

Was our trip successful? Yes! We encouraged the Christians with whom we met, and we were encouraged as well by their faithfulness.

We shared our personal testimonies with lost people and presented the plan of salvation to numbers of Japanese people.

According to Jesus' parable in Luke 8:11, the seed that was sown was the word of God. We sowed seed, abundantly.

On what type soil did it fall? We pray that many of the seeds fell on good ground that will "bring forth fruit with patience."

Hill is publisher of the Holmes County Herald in Lexington.

'Distress and uncertainty' haunt Yugoslavs

BELGRADE, Serbia (BP) — Post-war miseries continue in bombing-devastated Serbia, a Baptist-based humanitarian ministry leader reported in an e-mail newsletter Aug. 1.

"The economic and political situation continues to cause much distress and uncertainty," wrote Jasmina Tomic of the Bread of Life ministry headquartered in Belgrade.

Belgrade is the capital of the remaining nation of Yugoslavia, target of last year's U.S.-led NATO bombing campaign to counter ethnic cleansing in the Kosovo province.

Among specific concerns cited by Tomic:

- "Statistics show continuing inflation, while wages decline."

- "During this growing season we are experiencing a

severe drought, which will further jeopardize food supplies for the coming winter."

- "Hospitals are working without the most basic supplies. Families must provide food for patients."

- "Schools and kindergartens do not have adequate food for children nor needed supplies."

- "From many parts of the city and surrounding communities, workers' unions and

other groups are coming to us requesting assistance, since they are unable to provide food and clothing for their families."

"Many people are expressing their discouragement,

"Through various programs in distribution centers, schools, preschools, hospitals, and various institutions from January to June of 2000 we have helped 72,000 beneficiaries directly,"

she wrote of the ministry powered largely by volunteers from about a dozen Belgrade churches.

"Bread of Life carries a lot of weight," she noted with a touch of humor. "In fact, in the first six months of this year, we have handled 1,816 tons of humanitarian aid, or approximately one-third of all the materials we have handled since we began our work eight years ago."

Tomic recapped Bread of Life's work in several areas:

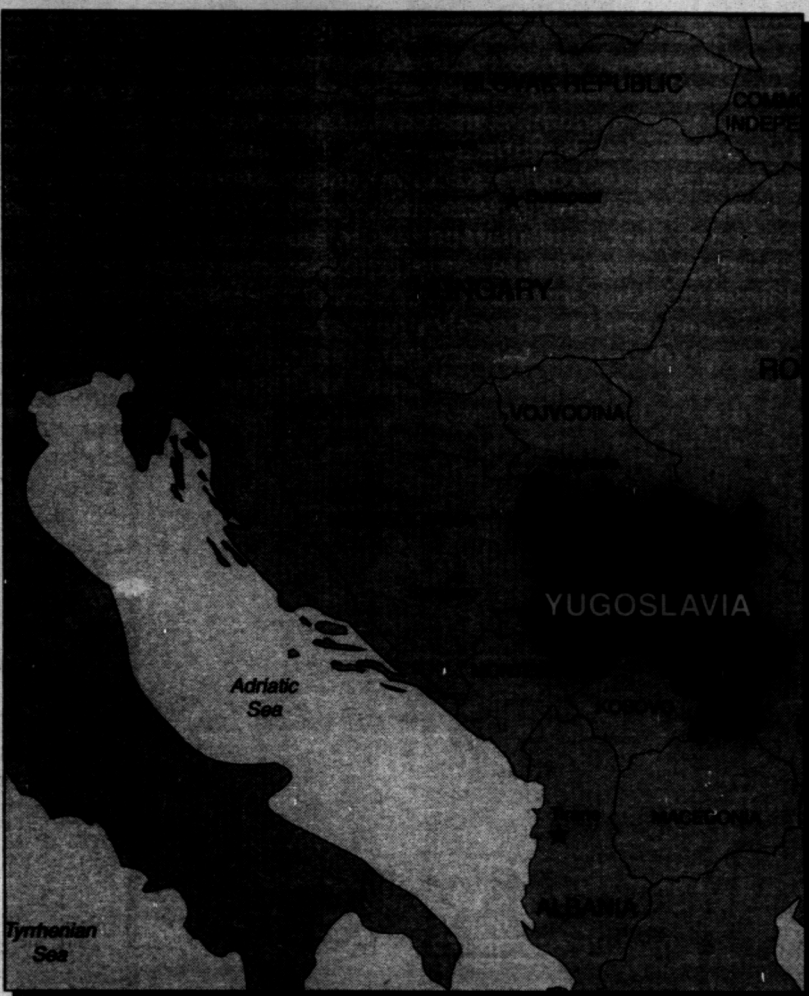
- Distribution of emergency food and clothing. "Emergency assistance continues to be needed by refugee families, as well as an ever-increasing number of local people who do not have adequate income to provide the basics of food and clothing," Tomic wrote. "We have been blessed with a regular supply of food packages, which have enabled us to distribute more than 10,000 parcels per month for the past six months in Belgrade and over 50 different locations throughout Serbia. That program is now completed, so we are actively exploring new sources of food supplies, in order to continue to meet the needs."

- Self-support program. "For many months we have been working to build for the future in addition to meeting emergency needs," Tomic reported, noting that families have been supplied with 260 animals and, by September, 80 tool kits, 20 small greenhouses, or 80 other minor renovations to their homes.

"Families have been selected on basis of need, as well as their capacity for making effective use of the resources," Tomic wrote. "The focus has been on providing a quality resource that actually provides a substantial opportunity."

"These families not only are appreciative of having a source of milk or eggs, or tools for earning a livelihood, but also [they] speak of the renewal of their hope because of these resources, which allow them to better provide for their own needs."

- Medical supplies. "As we have been making contacts in the community, the severe shortages in our hospitals have become obvious to us," Tomic wrote.



unable to see how things will get better," Tomic, a member of First Baptist Church, Belgrade, recounted.

"In spite of these uncertain times, we believe that we are called to act in hope, and to seize opportunities to expand our activities to meet the growing needs, which come to us on a regular basis."

Bread of Life's outreach has grown in the midst of the crisis, Tomic wrote.

Abortion: next class action target?

WASHINGTON (BP) — A lawsuit against an abortion clinic in Fargo, N.D., might be an opening for a series of class action suits against the abortion industry for failing to disclose the dangers of the procedure, according to an Aug. 9 report on CNSNews.com. The suit, Mattson v. Red River Women's Clinic, was filed 14 months ago on behalf of a woman who says she was the victim of false advertising because she was not informed of the connection between breast cancer and abortion.

The suit centers on a clinic brochure given to women seeking an abortion that reads, "Anti-abortion activists claim that having an abortion increases the risk of developing breast cancer and endangers future childbearing. None of these claims are supported by medical research or established medical organizations."

The suit alleges that "[b]y publishing and distributing a brochure stating that medical research does not support the claim that having an abortion increases the risk of developing breast cancer," the clinic violated informed consent laws requiring patients to be told the immediate and long-term risks of any surgical procedure.

The clinic has since withdrawn the brochure, but a judge denied its motion to dismiss the lawsuit on the grounds that the cause of action was moot. On Aug. 25, a hearing will be held in the case on attorney John Kindley's request for an injunction requiring the clinic to warn women seeking abortions of the risks of the procedure.

Kindley, representing Mattson, told CNSNews.com if the suit is successful, it could "open the abortion industry up to hundreds of tobacco-like lawsuits..."

Looking back

10 years ago

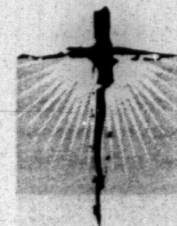
Mississippians are among Baptists from six states who arrive en masse to assist Alaska Baptists over a 12-day period in constructing seven churches and conducting Vacation Bible Schools and Backyard Bible Clubs — the volunteer labor alone saving the churches more than \$150,000.

20 years ago

The congregation of Bethlehem Church, Laurel, passes a resolution opposing the scheduling of youth baseball games on Sundays during church times and on Wednesday evenings during prayer meeting, after a tournament is played on recent Sunday and Wednesday evenings.

50 years ago

Baptists and Methodists in the town of Crosby join together to enroll 96 children for Vacation Bible School. Joint commencement exercises are held on Friday morning and the offering of \$16.30 is divided equally between the Mississippi Baptist and Methodist orphanages.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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Christians being targeted for 'elimination'

JAKARTA, Indonesia (BP)—Twenty-three Christians were massacred in Indonesia as they fled from their village in late July and early August, The Hindustan Times of India has reported. The report from Indonesia was relayed to U.S. media via Crosswalk.com, an Internet news and information site.

Christians are under threat of extermination by thousands of Jihad troops that have entered from outside the region, according to Newsroom, an online publication also cited by Crosswalk.com.

The troops have announced over loudspeakers that they will kill all Christians who remain after July 31, Ambon church leaders told U.S. church workers.

The killings were the latest Muslim-Christian violence that has swept the Maluku Islands since January 1999, leaving about 4,000 dead, according to Crosswalk.com's assessment of news reports.

Muslim assailants killed the latest victims as they tried to escape into the jungles of the Indonesian island of Ambon, a Christian activist told The Hindustan Times.

Jihad fighters are preparing lists of Christian leaders for "elimination," a churchwoman who declined to be named for fear of reprisal told Ecumenical News International.

About 90% of the Christians in Ambon have fled as mortar fire and bomb attacks continue, according to Newsroom.

According to an e-mail circulated July 28 quoting a Baptist pastor in Indonesia: "The Laskar Jihad [Banner of Holy War] command has openly announced through loudspeakers that [they and the Indonesia Military] will exterminate all Christians in Ambon. All inhabitants who wish to sur-

vive have been given an ultimatum to leave the city before July 31.

"However, escape routes are quickly closing for those who are desperately trying to flee, while the attack against the city of Ambon, using mortar fire and bombs, is continuing unabated.

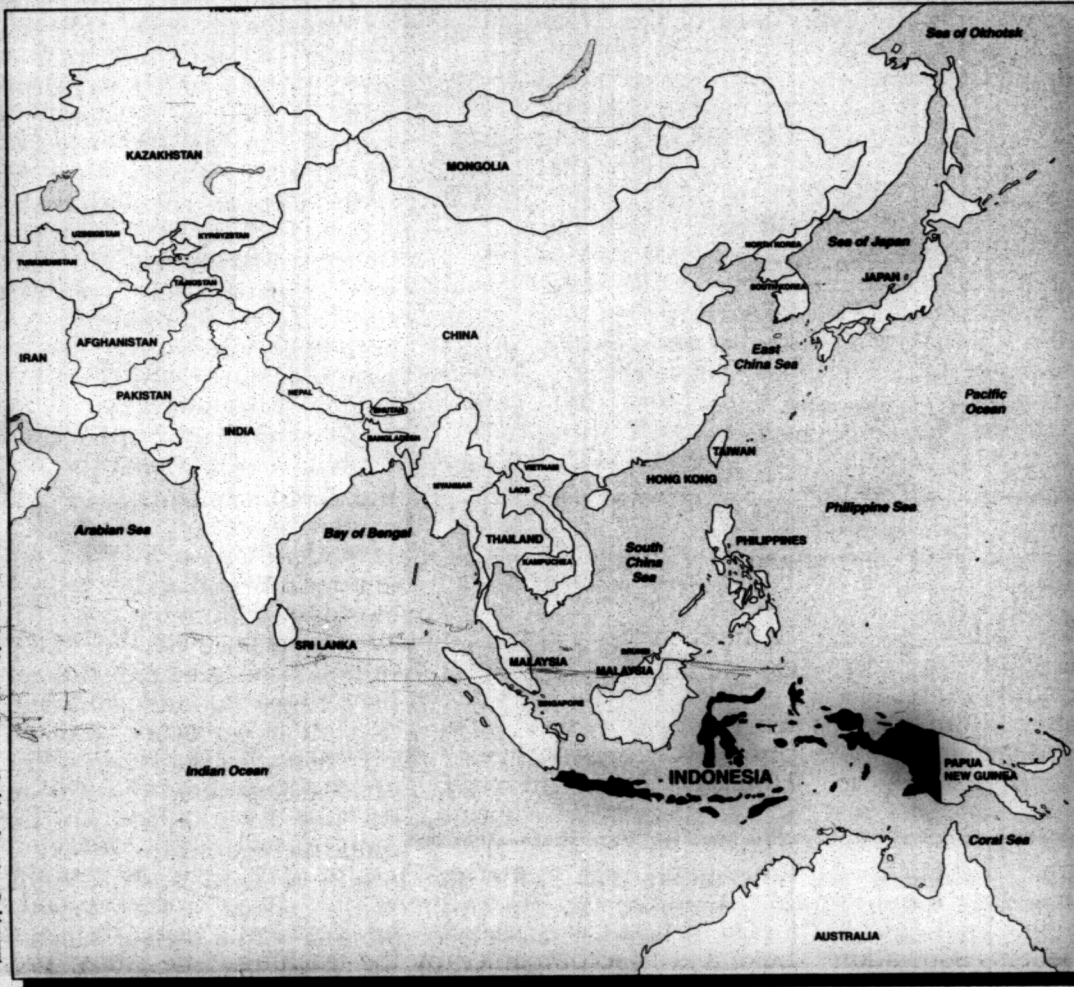
"Already 90% of the Christians have fled to the mountains, and now the attackers are advancing toward the mountains. More than

15,000 refugees are waiting along the piers of Halong naval base for their turn to board any ship leaving Ambon. Many are waiting at other seaside areas that are in Christian control.

"However, at this time of the year, with the sea waves reaching six to eight meters, and the ships in constant danger of being fired upon, escape itself is very risky.

"The refugees are wet (this being the rainy season in Ambon), hungry, inadequately clothed, suffering from all kinds of illnesses and intimidated in their spirits," said the pastor, whose description is likely the one circulated by Newsroom.

"Please keep praying. The roots of Christianity in Indonesia are in Ambon. If these roots can be uprooted, it may be the beginning of the end of Christianity in Indonesia."



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. *(I have sinned.)*
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. *(I repent.)*
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. *(I believe in Jesus.)*
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Encounter puts Muslim on road to Christianity

WEATHERFORD, Okla. (BP) — If you pray for God to broaden your horizons, be prepared — his providential hand might greet you in the checkout line at Wal-Mart.

Just ask Josh Hawkins and Farhan Shakaheel.

Students at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, Hawkins and Shakaheel have become close friends since providence linked them in the check out line.

They were virtual strangers; Shakaheel recognized Hawkins and his wife, Heather, at Wal-Mart, having seen them at Baptist Collegiate Ministries (BCM) meeting he had dropped in on that week while wandering around a campus still quiet from winter break.

"We were at Wal-Mart at about 8 at night. Farhan had gone to get water. He asked us if he could have a ride. I said sure," Hawkins said.

The night before, Jim Morrison, Southwestern's BCM director, had given a devotional to BCM student leaders from 1 Chronicles 4:10, citing the prayer of Jabez that God might "broaden my territory."

The devotional inspired Hawkins to likewise pray that his Christian witness would be expanded.

Earlier that week, Morrison, as a favor to an acquaintance at the college, had volunteered to drive to Oklahoma City to transport a new international student flying in from the United Arab Emirates. It was Shakaheel, and as they made the 90-minute journey to Weatherford, Morrison mentioned his work as BCM director and invited the new international student to visit.

The spring term was a week away and as Shakaheel walked the campus one evening, he saw the Baptist Collegiate Ministries building and stopped to find a group of students planning the spring semester's events.

"I had a very negative view of Christian people because of what I had been told for 23 years," said Shakaheel, raised a strict Muslim.

He said he was taught that all Americans were Christians who were morally loose.

"I was like, 'What is wrong with these people? Why do they trust God so much?'"

Coming to Oklahoma gave him the chance to continue his education after being expelled from a military school in his native land for insubordination, he said. He was lonely, bitter — even doubtful of God's existence despite his upbringing.

From the Wal-Mart parking lot onward, Shakaheel's path began to change.

"I felt very comfortable talking to him," he said of Hawkins.

Hawkins recalled: "He came over one night, probably 10:30 at night. We just talked. He had a lot of questions about our faith. He had a lot of negative questions concerning life, and Christianity as well.

"He was very much seeking. I am not an eloquent speaker. It was definitely a Holy Spirit evening. We sit in our complacency, but God says be ready to speak a word and stand up for him. It was an awe-inspiring experience."

About a week later, Hawkins and Shakaheel met with David Lawrence, a math professor at the university and bivocational pastor of Weatherford's Trinity Baptist Church.

Lawrence answered more of Shakaheel's questions — then he prayed to receive Christ.

"That night, something just hit me," Shakaheel said. "I started crying. I just felt so bad. I realized I was hurting God more than anyone else. I just felt like God was sitting next to me."

Lawrence recounted: "It was very exciting. He prayed to receive Christ, and he wept for

some time over his sinfulness. He felt he had said so many bad things about God, he was amazed that God would accept him. Farhan is like a sponge. He wants to absorb as much information as he can."

Of 4,800 students, Southwestern has fewer than 100 international students and very few Muslims, Morrison said. Shakaheel's family no longer is providing financial support.

"They've disowned me," he said. "My father doesn't want his surname attached to mine. It's really very harsh, but I'm trying to survive somehow. It could be worse. I still do get to go to school. I still get to eat. I could be out on the streets begging."

Shakaheel works in the university cafeteria and said the Lord has provided for him. Six months after accepting Christ, Shakaheel admitted he sometimes feels guilty about his past.

"Grace is still hard to comprehend," he said.

Shakaheel has eagerly shared his story, Lawrence said. His testimony brought a standing ovation at a Baptist association meeting during the spring.

"We could have held an invitation," Lawrence said.

"He's in a position where God can use him, and that's the thing that I'm looking forward to."

LITTLE BUGS, BIG WAVES

One beautiful, bright, warm day I was walking from the hospital to my car and I passed by a small pond and garden area.

As I was glancing down at the pool, I noticed ripples going out across the water. There was no fountain, no wind, and the water was otherwise still, except for this flow of circles.

As I looked closer at the still pool of water, I discovered the source of the ripples — a real small insect. This tiny bug was the cause of all the undulations in the pool — a little bug no bigger than the end of the fingernail on your little finger!

He was splashing and thrashing, and making all kinds of waves. One teensy little creature in what must have been to him, the equivalent of the Pacific Ocean. There he was, stirring up the entire pool!

I was captivated by the scene and stood there several seconds watching this sight and thinking to myself, "Little bugs sure



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

can make big waves!"

I suppose that is true, happening almost every day in virtually every area of life. Dogs and cats certainly know this truth. They will scratch and bite, lick and wiggle, and spend days and nights struggling with what to do with that pesky little unseen flea.

Many a tree farmer has painfully learned this fact as thousands of acres of pine trees have had to be cut down because of the little southern pine beetle. Little bugs make big waves!

You and I can see them almost everywhere, little "human" bugs — on TV, in

newspapers, attending national political conventions, sometimes in pulpits, and other times in pews.

These "human" bugs are not always just physically small in stature, but it usually has something to do with spirit and attitude.

Jesus ran into this "small bug" mentality during his ministry. At times it was clothed in pharisaical clothes, or religious rags. At other times it may have put on governmental garb.

During the closing days of his life, our Lord was brought up before the area's powerful governor named Pilate. He was

a "big man" with a "small spirit," — a small bug thrashing about on the stage of history.

You can even find such small size, big-turbulence kind of folks in churches. John devoted a part of his third epistle to address a man by the name Diotrephes, who loved to have preeminence among the brethren.

He had a "wee-little" spirit with a "big, self-centered" attitude. He positioned himself right smack-dab in the middle of everything and proceeded to harm, rather than help, the church. We can all be thankful that he lived in the first century, and not now.

I suppose, in time, the little bug found his way to the shore, or to a twig, and calmed down and the waves ceased. However, for a little while, one little bug made big waves.

As you travel about in life passing alongside the various ponds on your journey, just stay calm and don't be overcome by the ripples created by the little bugs!

Beth Moore returns with new Bible study on Jesus

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — It's been a busy year for Beth Moore. In March, the popular author and Bible study leader was in Israel videotaping her sixth in-depth Bible study — "Jesus: The One and Only" — before 800 women who were invited to be a part of the worship experience.

By June's end, she had conducted four Living Proof seminars with a total of 22,000 women and was to conduct four more by December.

At the Christian Booksellers Association in New Orleans in mid-July, she completed media interviews and signed her Bible study books until her fingers were numb.

After leading the weekend conference in Louisville, Ky., attended by 9,000 women in June, Moore put the finishing touches on "Jesus: The One and Only," which is being published by LifeWay Christian Resources

of the Southern Baptist Convention and is expected to be released in December.

"I just put the period on the last sentence an hour ago," she said during a phone interview from her office in Houston. "That is an incredible feeling."

Researching and writing each of the studies "usually takes about a year of total focus and being immersed in a project," Moore said.

The new study is based on the Gospel of Luke and is accompanied by the teaching video she taped in Israel.

"The whole setting is almost indescribable," she said. "It changed my complete perspective" of the study.

Moore said she hopes people who explore the life of Jesus through the 11-week study will "view it as an eyewitness as much as possible. My goal is to feel like

we got the same sand in our sandals" that Jesus did.

Noting that her studies are designed specifically for women, Moore said, "I like to imagine what the scene looked like and smelled like. I think I write from a romantic point of view. I wanted to know all about Mary's pregnancy" and other details of first century life.

Moore said she asked God to "do something miraculously" through the pages of the study, prompting women to "experience something in their hearts and minds that is beyond anything I've written."

Such bold, direct requests of God are not unusual in Moore's life and ministry. Telling conference participants that "a romance with God is just incredible," she said she frequently asks God to "satisfy me with your unfailing love."

"I don't ask small things of God because I don't have a small God," she said. "God is God and he is so merciful."

Moore said she doesn't understand why God has chosen to use her to minister to thousands of women.

"This is not false humility," she emphasized. "There are times I weep and ask, 'Why do you let me be a part of this?' God over and over and over says, 'This isn't about you.'"

Describing her writing motivation and inspiration, Moore explained, "If God tells me to write something and he begins to press on my heart to study that subject matter, I do it. I write how God leads me. It's a very liberating way to work."

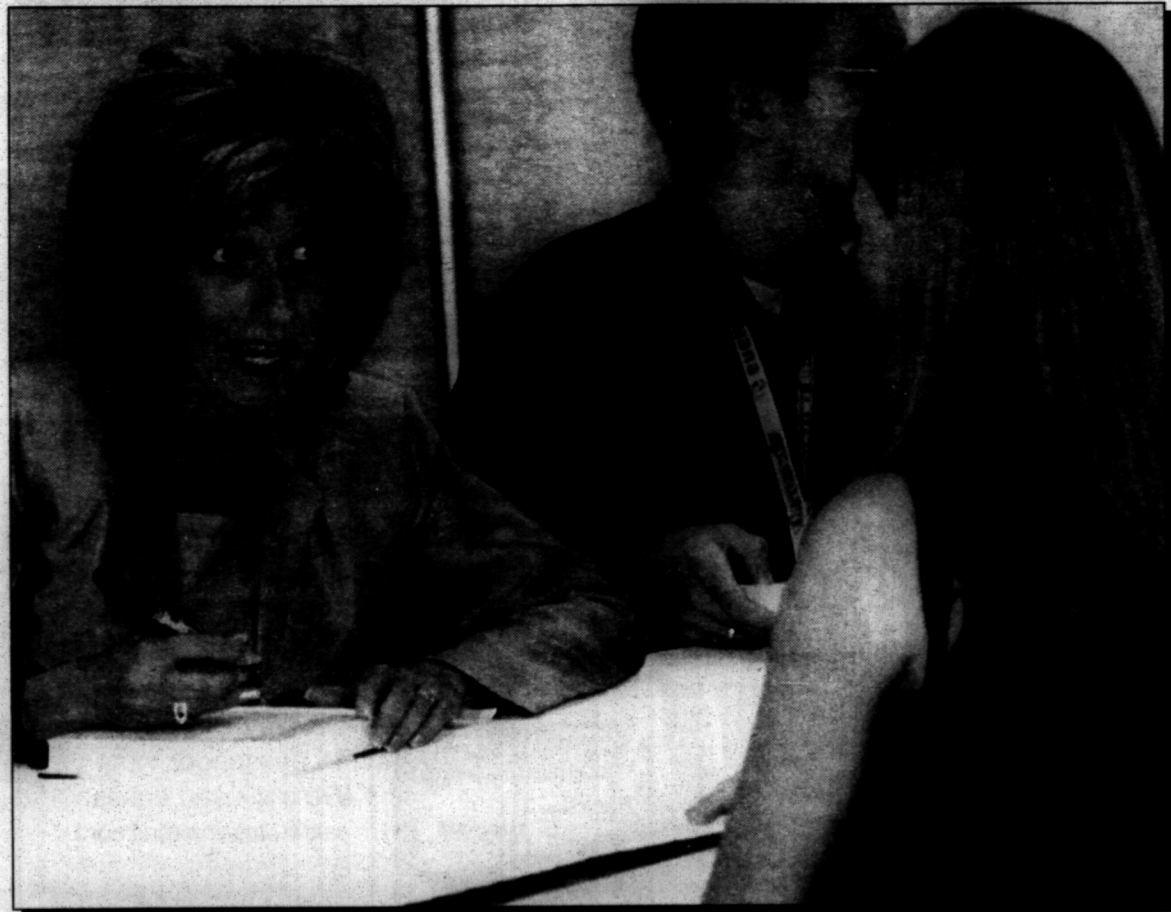
Moore said she believes the rapid growth of numerous Bible-based ministries in recent years "is the work of the Spirit in our generation."

"There is an unparalleled work of discipleship," she said. "What I am called to do is part of what God is doing in this generation."

"Every person on the planet needs hope. Somewhere along the way, my life helps represent some of that to them — that God can do anything with anybody."

Describing her ministry "for this season," Moore said, "What God has called me to do is encourage people to love him through his Word."

"I'm convinced to know him is to love him. Nothing beats the pure excitement and delight of God's Word."



AUTOGRAPHED COPY — Beth Moore, a popular author and Bible study leader among women, signs her books at the Christian Book Sellers Association meeting in New Orleans in mid-July. Moore's sixth in-depth Bible study, Jesus: The One and Only, is due out in December 2000. (BP photo by Terri Lackey)

Homosexuality instruction at issue in Ore.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Concerned parents and homosexual activists are squaring off in Oregon in what appears to be the next major battle over the teaching of homosexuality in public schools.

Pro-family advocates in the state have collected 83,281 signatures on a petition in an effort to get a citizens' referendum on the November ballot that could prevent homosexuality from being taught in schools, with taxpayer money being withheld from any school found in violation.

Meanwhile, homosexual activists have hired a professional political consultant to direct their efforts, with support coming from groups that traditionally vote Democrat — educators and labor unions.

Observers say if the Oregon initiative makes the November ballot, it will mark the first time that a state will vote on the issue.

Senate okays legislation on sex trafficking

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. Senate has approved without objection legislation to combat the international problem of sexual trafficking in women and children.

The Senate adopted the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, H.R. 3244, by unanimous consent July 27. Though the version approved by the senators was similar to the House bill passed in May, its differences will require a conference committee of members of both houses to negotiate a final measure.

About 50,000 women and children are brought into this country each year in the sex trade, according to experts on the issue. It is estimated there are as many as 2 million sex-trafficking victims a year worldwide, according to the State Department, with at least 1 million of those children. The sex trade has become a profitable enterprise for organized crime, witnesses have testified at congressional hearings.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Members of the Japan-USA Partnership 2000 from First Church, Lexington, are shown with Southern Baptist Convention missionaries Liz and Hershel Johnson, members of Futsukaichi Christian Church in Chikushino City, Japan. Pictured on the third row beginning with second from left are: Mitsuhiro Ariyoshi; Goki Saito; Bruce Hill; Doug Applegate, pastor of First Church, Lexington; Chris Applegate; Liz Johnson, Hershel Johnson; and Takeshi Yamanaka. The three Japanese men identified are serving along with Johnson as preachers for the church until they call a pastor.

Silver Creek Church, McComb, and the Outdoor Evangelism Association will hold a one day hunter's seminar Aug. 19 at 7 p.m. at the church. Gene Hoyt, a world champion turkey caller, will share his calling and Christian testimony. David Fortenberry, pastor of First Church, Amite, La., will present a seminar on tree stand safety and whitetail deer hunting. Call (601) 783-9083 for details. Patrick G. Bourg is pastor of Silver Creek Church.

The Spokesmen will be in concert at Lollars Grove Church, Eupora, on Aug. 19 at 6:30 p.m.



8-4-1, a praise and worship ministry of Indian Springs Church, Laurel, is available for concerts, banquets, homecomings, and more. For more information, contact the church office at (601) 428-1279. Ken Culpepper is minister of music.

Celebrate Jesus 2000, an area-wide crusade, will be held at the Crossroads Arena, Corinth, at 7 p.m. on Sept. 17-20. Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Church, Cordova, Tenn., will be the special guest speaker. For more information, call (662) 286-8215.

Youth Late Night will be held at Hickory Church, Hickory, 8:30 p.m. on Aug. 20. The guest speaker will be Gary Permenter of Columbus. Rodney Anderson is pastor.

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Mission team from Liberty Church, Union Association

A group from **Liberty Church, Union Association**, went on a mission trip to Monroe Memorial Church, Denton, Maryland, July 1-7. While there they did door to door witnessing, a block party, construction and yard work at the church, and a lock-in for the youth of the church. They also worked with a group of Bikers for Christ. Also, they helped the "Feed the Children" organization by collecting money to buy food for the poor. The team consisted of Edward Murry; Tim and Michael Seger; Ashley Purvis; Ben Hall; Patsy Davis; Randle, Amy and Jacob Pilcher; Terry, Dana, Kelly, Michael Pickens; and Hannah, Lynita, and Shawn Davis (pastor). Pictured are members from Liberty Church, Monroe Memorial Church, and Bikers for Christ.

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A group from **Shiloh Church, Sontag**, went to Berwind, West Virginia, on a mission trip July 1-7. Pictured are Paul Wilbourn, pastor; Bud and Marilyn Daughdrill; Alvin and Bobby Ashley; Jan, Carla, and Andy Douglas; Maxie Boutwell; Debo and Quin Sylvester; Jason Lea, Gordon Cliburn; and Gloria Ervin.



The staff of **Mission team from Shiloh Church, Sontag Central Hills Baptist Retreat** was honored on July 23 by First Church,

Kosciusko, with an appreciation dinner. Sue Dorrill and Kelly Middleton, WMU co-chairman served as hostesses. Following the meal, staff members presented music and testimonies in the evening service. Pictured (from left) are Middleton; Dan and Rachel West, camp manager; James Warren; Mack Purvis; Chris Lane; Kevin Lum; Bo Wilshire; Bobby John Panni; Justin Shaffle; Joshua Heath; James Lane; Dorrill; (back row) Patrick Sharp; Matthew Johnson; Stephen Wade; Josh Simpson; Kevin Hawkins; Jarrod Lee; Carlton Brady; and Carl Johnson, camp director. Barry C. Corbett is pastor.



Staff of Central Hills Baptist Retreat

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



Mission team from Hickory Grove Church, Coldwater

A mission team from Hickory Grove Church, Coldwater, recently took a trip to Eufaula, Oklahoma, where they worked with Vacation Bible School, puppet ministry, and evangelism at West Eufaula Indian Church. Mike Stovall is pastor of Hickory Grove Church. Pictured (from left, kneeling) are Betty Taylor, Jessica Smith, Mary Margaret Farrow, Harvey McMullen, Kristen

Chappell; (standing) Barney Taylor, Bobby Jo Taylor, Beverly Smith, Anita Farrow, and Vickie Chappell; (back row) Andrew Taylor, Jimmy Farrow, Vickie Darnell, Mack Darnell, and Mac Smith.

Youth from Pinelake Church, Brandon; Magnolia Church, Hattiesburg; and Park Place Church, Brandon; recently attended the regional AWANA (Approved Workmen

Are Not Ashamed) camp at Fort Bluff, Dayton, Tenn. AWANA is an international, non-denominational, Bible-centered, youth organization whose goal is to reach boys and girls three years old to high school age with the gospel of Christ. To qualify for the camp, students must be entering sixth grade or higher and have completed two handbooks since third grade. Pictured from Pinelake Church are Megan Goodin, Adam Edwards (has completed 10 handbooks since age 3), Sarah Ross, and Kelly Harkins; Kelsey Patton, from Magnolia Church; and Sarah Johnston, Park Place Church.

GAs of Sherman Church, Sherman, had a Hawaiian Luau celebrating the June Mission Study on Hawaii. Pictured (bottom row) Elizabeth Hartley, Katlin Craig, Katie Christian, Kayla Brown, Lauren Tate; (top row) Ashley Abbott, Courtney Hicks, Jala Taylor, Lauren Hartley, and Katie Spencer.

Girls from Morrison Chapel Church, Cleveland, received superior in the State Children's Bible Drill 2000.



AWANA campers

Pictured (from left, first row)

are Haley Huerta, Ann Marie Peavey, Kendall Roberts; (second row) Cody Cannady, Sarah Jayne Jordan, Teresa Pongetti, Katie Macon; (third row) Jimmie Ray and Betty Junkin, Bible Drill leaders.



Bible Drillers of Morrison Chapel Church, Cleveland



RAs from Freedom Church, Laurel, went on a camping trip June 9-10 to a lake belonging to O.E. Myers, a member of Freedom Church. Their teachers are Garrick Staples and Eric Womack. Robby Johnson is pastor.

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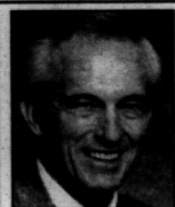
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Corrections

On page 10 of the issue of August 10, two beginning dates for New Orleans Seminary classes were incorrectly listed. The beginning dates for both Tri-County Association Building in Columbia, and Meadville Church, Meadville, is August 22, not August 21.

On page two of the issue of August 10, Harry Neal of Winona was incorrectly identified in a photograph as Ken West of Greenville.

The Baptist Record regrets the errors.

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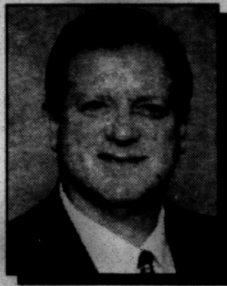


NAMES IN THE NEWS



Hill, Alexander, and Tedder

Eric McNair, minister of music since 1985, will be honored on Aug. 27 for 15 years of service at McLaurin Heights Church, Pearl. The celebration will be held following the morning worship service with a covered dish lunch provided by the church. J. Steve Jackson is pastor.



McNair



Jager, The Graysons, and McWilliams

and David Carr of Ooltewah, Tenn.; six grandchildren; and one sister, Virginia Coon of Navarre, Fla.

G. Bourg is pastor of Silver Creek Church.

Chad Grayson of Magee was recently ordained to the gospel ministry at Coat Church, Magee. Grayson is pastor of Holly Grove Church, Braxton. Pictured (from left) are David Jager, wife Lenora Grayson, Chad Grayson, and William McWilliams.

Wayne Hall was ordained to the ministry by Silver Creek Church, Pike County. Hall is currently serving as interim pastor for Silver Springs Church near Progress. Patrick

Macedonia Church to celebrate 150th

Macedonia (Deentown) Church, Blue Mountain, will celebrate its 150th anniversary and homecoming on Aug. 27. Worship services will begin at 11 a.m. with Albert Wilkerson of First Church, Ripley, preaching. Lunch will be served at noon. There will be singing beginning at 1:30 p.m. with Friends Again and others. Revival will begin on Monday, Aug. 28, at 7 p.m. Wilkerson will also conduct the revival services each night.

Ogden Church, Benton, ordained Scott Alexander to the gospel ministry on July 30. Alexander, son of Mike and Carol Alexander, is a student at Mississippi College and is serving at First Church, Tallulah, La., as youth minister. Pictured (from left) are Joe Hill, pastor of Anding Church; Alexander; and Emerson Tedder, pastor of Ogden Church.

James C. Carr, 74, died March 2 at his home in Cleveland, Tenn. Carr was a retired pastor and had pastored several churches in Mississippi before moving to Tennessee. Survivors include his wife of 52 years, Erma Carr; three daughters, Sue Carr of Greenwood, Carolyn Willis of Maryville, Tenn., and Rebecca Draper of Springfield, Mo.; two sons, Harvey Carr of Baltimore, Md.,

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS



Jackson and McFarling

award for being the longest standing advisor, and Kim McFarling, who also won first place in the Mississippi Ms. Future Business Teacher competition, placed fifth at the National Convention. McFarling graduated in May and will begin her teaching career in Amory. Jackson has served as Future Business Leaders

Office of Continuing Education, or call Ken Gilliam at (601) 925-3263.

Commencement ceremonies, closing the 174th academic session at Mississippi College (MC), were held on Aug. 5. An Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters was bestowed upon E. Harold Fisher, presi-

dent of Blue Mountain College since 1965. Jayne A. Sargent, superintendent of schools of the Jackson Public School District, gave the commencement address. Jon Doler, pastor of First Church, Leland, gave the benediction. Pictured (from left) are Doler; Fisher; Howell W. Todd, president of MC; and Sargent.



Doler, Fisher, Todd, and Sargent



Kathy Voyles recently received the Blue Mountain College (BMC) Alumna of the year award during the annual reunion. Kathy McKinney, the BMC National Alumnae Association president, made the presentation.

A Blue Mountain College (BMC) faculty member and student were recently recognized at the National Phi Beta Lambda Conference. Pictured (above from left) are Dot Jackson from BMC who received the Golden Apple

America/Phi Beta Lambda advisor for 31 years.

Mississippi College, through the Office of Continuing Education, will offer the Senior Adult Education Program for the Fall 2000 semester. This program allows senior adults (age 55 or above) to register and attend selected academic courses. The cost is \$50 per course and allows senior adults to audit the class/classes on a non-credit basis. Registration deadline is Aug. 21. Interested applicants should contact the



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Dr. Jim Futral
executive director-treasurer of
the Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board, evangelist

Ronnie Cottingham
music evangelist

HONORED BY AWARD

Editor:

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to The Baptist Record and the many Mississippi Baptist churches that helped me to be the 1999 Agent of the Year for Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company. This is the first time an agent in Mississippi has ever been awarded this honor. Thanks again for your help.

Mike Brooks
Wellington Associates, Inc.
Jackson

THANKS FOR VEHICLE

Editor:

We serve as International Mission Board missionaries in

Brazil. We appreciate the faithful giving and praying of Mississippi Baptists that help make it possible for us to be here where God has called us.

Recently, we returned to the U.S. for our daughter's graduation from college and her wedding.

We want to express our appreciation to the Macedonian Call Foundation of Mississippi for the vehicle they provided for our use during that trip. It was a great blessing to us.

The Macedonian Call Foundation is dedicated to providing vehicles to missionaries who return to the U.S., especially on short term trips.

It truly is a needed and helpful ministry. Individuals and churches can participate

in the ministry of the Macedonian Call Foundation.

If you would like to find out how you can help, please contact the foundation at (601) 956-7770, or write the foundation at P.O. Box 156, Ridgeland, MS 39158-0156.

John & Kathy Vaughn
Brazil, South America

WHY ALL THE FUSS?

Editor:

I would like to know — why all the fuss about divorce? It seems to me Southern Baptists take the position that if you have been divorced, you are not fit to become a deacon or pastor. Are they holding the sin of divorce against a person who has been

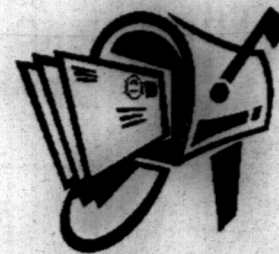
forgiven of all his sins?

God's perfect plan for us was for one man and one woman to marry and produce their offspring. That was planned for a perfect world. We do not live in a perfect world and some marriages are not biblical.

Christ died for our sins and that means all our sins. If he has forgiven our sins, we are cleansed and made fit for his service!

Why harp on divorce instead of adultery, murder, etc. By not allowing divorced men to become deacons or pastors, it would appear that divorce is an unforgivable sin and the Bible does not teach that!

S. C. McDaniel
Biloxi



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

REVIVAL DATES

Bethany, Bay Springs: Aug. 21-23; 7 p.m.; Hueston Adkins, director of missions, Jasper Association, speaker.

Old Union, Shannon: Aug. 20-23; Sunday, 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Kara Blackard, Wheeler Grove, evangelist; Chad Logan, minister of music; Kenneth Kelly, pastor.

Macedonia (Deentown) Church, Ripley: Aug. 28-30; 7 p.m.; Albert Wilkerson, Ripley, evangelist.

Silver Creek, McComb: Aug. 20-23; 7 p.m. nightly; David Fortenberry, evangelist; Adrian Wood, music; Patrick Bourg, pastor.

Gliff Temple, Natchez: Aug. 20-23; 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Paul Wilson, Tupelo, evangelist; Donnie McIlwain, Cliff Temple Church, music; Don Womble, pastor.

Friendship, Aberdeen: Aug. 27-30; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; David Ard, Little Rock, Ark., evangelist; Dale Wilemon, Aberdeen, music; Todd Bowen, pastor.

Short Creek, Yazoo City: Aug. 28-30; 7 p.m.; Gowan Ellis, Terry, speaker.

Goss, Columbia: Aug. 20-23; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; David Millican, evangelist; Bernie Parker, music; David Laird, pastor.

Morgan City, Morgan City: Aug. 31-Sept. 3; Sunday, 10:55 a.m.; 7 p.m. nightly; Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist.

Cash, Lena: Aug. 16-20; Wed.-Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, lunch at the church, 7 p.m.; David Vernon, evangelist; Betty Weaver, music; Pat McNair, pastor.

First, Raleigh: Aug. 20-23; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Hardy Denham, Hattiesburg, evan-

gelist; Drew Whittington, minister of music; O. Lyn Nations, pastor.

McLaurin Heights, Pearl: August 21, 7 p.m., Joe Pridgen, Sweet Rest Church, Pearl, evangelist; Melanie Musgrove, First Lady of Mississippi, guest testimony; August 28, 7 p.m., Carl M. White, Highland Church, Meridian, evangelist; Jim Murray, former member of the Imperials Quartet, Hendersonville, Tenn., music; Eric McNair, minister of music; J. Steve Jackson, pastor.

HOMEcomings

Linwood (Neshoba): Aug. 27; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; singing and worship service at 10:30 a.m.; Jimmy Breland, guest speaker; covered dish lunch at noon; Jeff Mann, pastor.

First Church of Glendale, Hattiesburg: Aug. 27; 10 a.m.; dinner in the fellowship hall at 11 a.m.; musical program at noon; Billy Skinner, former pastor 1987-1989, speaker; Mark Long, pastor.

Wade, Moss Point: Aug. 20; 10:30 a.m.; dinner on the grounds; afternoon singing; note burning for new sanctuary (paid off \$650,000 in four years); Sam Johnson, Ocean Springs, guest speaker; William L. Barton, pastor.

Bethany, Bay Springs: Aug. 20; worship, 11 a.m.; Hueston Adkins, speaker; lunch at noon in the fellowship hall; 1:30 p.m. service will feature The Gospel Strings singing group.

Short Creek, Yazoo City: Aug. 27; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; Jerry File, Raymond, guest speaker; covered dish dinner following worship service.

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CITY-WIDE, INNER CHURCH GARAGE SALE Sept. 1 and 2 at Morrison Heights Baptist Church. Proceeds will go to support the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary. Volunteers and donations are needed. Contact Judy Williams at 924-5283; or Sandra Nash at 924-9205.

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WOODMONT BAPTIST CHURCH, NASHVILLE, TENN., is seeking a minister of education and single adults. Qualifications include college and seminary degrees and at least 5 years of relevant and successful ministerial experiences. Responsibilities include leadership of all of the church's educational and training programs and leadership to the growing single adults program and activities. Send resumes to Arliss Roaden, Chairman, Minister of Education and Singles Search Committee, Woodmont Baptist Church, 2100 Woodmont Blvd., Nashville, TN 37215; call: 615-373-8914; fax: 615-371-5804; or email to a.l.roaden@juno.com.

SEEKING FULL-TIME MINISTER of youth and education; seminary preferred. Send resume to Calvary Baptist Church, 785 First Street, Idaho Falls, ID 83401 or calvary@srv.net.

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COLLEGE MINISTER NEEDED. Bi-vocational 25-30 hours/week. Please send resume to Morrison Heights Baptist Church, 201 Morrison Drive, Clinton, MS 39056 or fax to 601-924-5622, Attn: Jennifer.

MINISTER OF MUSIC AND YOUTH NEEDED for Ruleville Baptist Church. Send resume to Higdon Herrington, P.O. Box 187, Ruleville, MS 38771. Telephone: 662-756-4309 or 662-756-2873.

BILOXI, MS., HAS OPENING for a bi-vocational pastor. Send resume to East Howard Baptist Church, Attn: Search Committee, 241 Howard Ave., Biloxi, MS 39530.

CHILDHOOD MINISTRIES DIRECTOR NEEDED. Please send resume to Morrison Heights Baptist Church, 201 Morrison Drive, Clinton 39056 or fax to 601-924-5622, Attn: Jennifer.

NEEDED: ROCKY HILL BAPTIST CHURCH, Weeson, Miss., has a need for a music director and for a pianist. Contact James Harris at 601-833-8280 or call the church at 601-643-0085 and leave a message.

LIFE AND WORK

The key to fulfillment

Philippians 1:1-2:30

By Matt Loving

More so now than ever before there seems to be an overabundance of people seeking to find fulfillment in life. People turn solely to work, personal achievement, recreation, relationships and the like. As the saying goes, people are doing more and enjoying it less. Many Christians have become ensnared by the doing and getting philosophy for finding fulfillment in life. This is the time for believers to wholeheartedly hold on to Jesus for life and live the exhortation of 1 Peter 3:15 by setting apart Christ as Lord in their hearts, always being prepared to give an answer to those who will ask for the rea-

son for the hope that is in them. Nothing can ever take the place of the peace of God. Fulfillment comes from a lifestyle and worldview that centers on letting Christ work in you, living out his values, and doing his work with his attitude toward life and eternity.

Let Christ work in you (1:3-6). This is the foundation for fulfillment in life: coming into the initial right relationship with God by grace through faith in Jesus alone and then allowing God both to will and to do according to his good purpose through the power of the Holy Spirit (2:13). He is faithful when we are faithless. God's plan for



Loving

fulfillment in our lives is that we center it in letting God work out his way in each of our lives rather than concentrating on our own abilities to accomplish things. In the words of Hannah Whitall Smith, "You must hand yourself, with your temptations, your temperament, your frames and feelings, and all your inward and outward experiences, over into the care and keeping of your God, and leave it all there. He made you, and therefore He understands you, and knows how to manage you; and you must trust him to do it...and here you must rest, trusting yourself thus to Him, continually and absolutely" (The Christian's Secret Of A Happy Life, pp. 39).

Discern what is best (1:9-11). Paul's prayer for the Philippian believers is grounded in the truth that love for God activated by knowledge results in righteous-

ness like that of Christ and brings glory to God. Jesus himself clearly explained this concept to the religious leaders of his day in John 5:39-40, as well as in Matthew 22:34-40. Within these passages we can learn that studying the Scriptures apart from coming to Jesus is not the way to fulfillment and life. All the prophets and the law hang on two things: to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind and to love your neighbor as yourself. Abiding in Christ first and foremost will then lead one to godly wisdom as they study Scripture. C.S. Lewis once explained this truth when he wrote "there would be no sense in saying you trusted a person if you would not take his advice. Thus if you have really handed yourself over to Him, it must follow that you are trying to obey Him, but trying in a new way, a less worried way. Not doing these things in order to be saved, but because He has begun to save you already. Not

hoping to get to Heaven as a reward for your actions, but inevitably wanting to act in a certain way because the first faint gleam of Heaven is already inside of you" (Mere Christianity, pp. 131).

Stand firm for Christ and be a shining witness (1:27-30 and 2:14-16). As one rests in faith in Christ, they will face outward and inward opposition. Even as believing in Christ is a privilege, Paul emphasized that suffering for Christ is a privilege. We must let the Holy Spirit teach us to face adversities from the standpoint that Jesus has overcome the world, and not out of our own commonsense. As we learn to trust the Father, rather than complain, and we live to please the Father, rather than the sinful world around us that refuses to follow God, the inevitable result will be lives that shine like the stars in the universe.

Loving is minister of youth at Oak Hill Church, Poplarville.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Total triumph

Revelation 20:1-2, 4b-7, 10-12, 14-15

By Tommy Bufkin

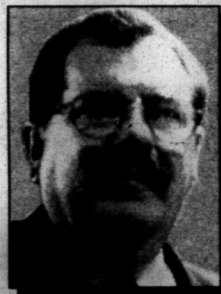
The news came over the radio. The war was over! All over America, people poured out into the streets to celebrate. Victory! The enemy had been defeated. What joy!

One reason Christians can rejoice is that the outcome of the conflict is sure. Jesus wins! Rejoice in Jesus' complete and final victory.

Satan bound (vv. 1-2). Chapter 20 is one of the most disputed chapters in the Bible. The differences in interpretation have to do with the thousand years mentioned in the chapter. A view called amillennialism holds that the thousand-year

reign of Christ is symbolic, not literal. Another view called premillennialism contends that Christ's return will precede a seven-year tribulation followed by the millennium. Another view not usually held today is that things will get better on earth so that Christ is Lord on earth though not physically present. This millennium of good times will be followed by Christ's return. This is known as postmillennialism.

This angel is probably the same as the one that fell like a star (9:1). The key and chain indicate that God is in control of the pit and it will be secure. The binding of Satan refers to the limitation of



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Satan's influence in the world. It is when this occurs that is the subject of debate. One thing is sure. God has power over Satan and limits his activity.

Saints raised (vv. 4b-7). Those who had been martyred in the great war will live and reign with Christ. This was a word of encouragement to believers to resist unto death. The "rest of the dead" probably refers to unregenerate dead who would be judged.

The fifth beatitude of Revelation is found in verse six. Those who experience the first resurrection will not face the second death. The second death is spiritual and permanent, not physical and temporary. Their special position is seen in that they will reign with Christ.

It is not explained why Satan is let loose. Perhaps there must be a final conflict and clear defeat

for Satan. Satan is powerful but limited and will be finally defeated by the power of God.

Humanity judged (vv. 10-12). John sees the final and crushing fate of Satan, who is cast into the same place of torment as the beast and false prophet. "Fire and brimstone" recalls the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah which was God's punishment for the wicked. This punishment, however, will never end. It will not be a passive punishment. They will be tormented.

The "great white throne" is probably not the throne in chapter four as it is in heaven. Its appearance and function indicate a pure and perfect judgment. The one on the throne is not identified but is certainly God. His glory is so great that the old creation vanishes.

The language indicates that none will escape the judgment of God. Books are opened. The "Book of Life" contains the names of all who have been

redeemed in Christ (v. 15). The "books" indicate that all are known by God. He knows what they have done and what they have not done.

Unredeemed punished (vv. 14-15). It will be the end of "Death and Hades." These abstractions are personalized. Death is the common end of man and Hades, the place of the dead, is their common destination. That is done away with. Death means more than just not living. To live is to be with God; death is separation from God. The "second death" is the final and eternal separation from God.

Those whose names are in the Book of Life live in the presence of God forever. All others share the fate of Satan, the beast, and the false prophet.

God's final judgment is terrible for those who reject his Son, but by the grace of God believers are delivered from death to life.

Bufkin is pastor of Mt. Zion Church, Rankin Association.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

A way of life

Colossians 3:1-17

By Juanita West

Teachers in many disciplines present the doctrine or theology to be learned and then support it with examples, illustrations, and applications to life. Jesus often taught this way. Paul uses this format extensively when he shares the truth of the Word as demonstrated in Colossians.

What to seek (vv. 1-3). The Apostle instructs the believers to put their minds totally on the "things above" and "not on things on the earth" as the false teachers encouraged (v. 2). Seeking God's eternal presence is a daily discipline for the Christian. "A Christian's life is no longer dictated by this world but is hidden with Christ in God,"

(The Nelson Study Bible, v.3, p. 2015). Paul uses the comparison of the believer's life to the act of baptism, which symbolizes the believer's death to the old life and resurrection to the new life in Christ.

The follower's life changes focus as the worldly cares and concerns give way to eternal matters. "He will, for instance, set giving above getting, serving above ruling, forgiving above avenging. The Christian's standard of values will be God's, not men's" (William Barclay, the Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p. 147). Oswald Chambers, in his book My Utmost for His Highest, says: "We talk as if it were the



West

most precarious thing to live the sanctified life: it is the most secure thing, because it has Almighty God in and behind it. The most precarious thing is to try and live without God. If we are born again, it is the easiest thing to live in right relationship to God and the most difficult thing to go wrong, if only we will heed God's warnings and keep in the right" (C 1963, p.359).

What to stop (vv. 5-11). Paul admonishes the Colossian Christians that they are not to go on living as if they were alive to sin. Even though the believers once participated in these worldly activities, Paul calls on them to abandon their practices. The Bible Knowledge Commentary states, "This command suggests a decisive action, as if Paul said, 'Mortify it! Do it now! Do it resolutely!'" (p. 680). Barclay says, "Everything which would keep him (Christian) from fully obey-

ing God and fully surrendering to Christ must be surgically excised" (p. 150).

The Apostle lists those behaviors which the believers should abandon, reminding them that "The wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience" (v. 6, NKJ). Since the Colossians have a new life in Christ, Paul looks at their lives as "new man and old man" (vv. 9-10).

With this description, Paul recognizes the believer's "former unredeemed life as the old man, and the life as God's child as the new man" (The Nelson Study Bible, p. 2016). This new found freedom in Christ knows no barriers. All distinctions are removed through Christ who is "all and in all" (v. 11, NKJ).

What to start (vv. 12-17). Since the Colossian Christians have been chosen by God and have put on a new life, Paul urges them on to another decisive action: "clothe yourself with a heart of pity, kindness, humility,

gentleness, patience" (v. 12). These virtues, listed as a contrast to the vices of the old nature, deal with "personal relationships between man and those which govern human relationships" (Barclay, p. 157).

In addition, the Christian is to bear with one another and forgive each one (v. 13). Yet, above all of these virtues, the Christian should display love, "which is the bond of perfection" (v. 14). In their hearts, the believers are to carry the peace of God and are to be thankful (v. 15). The Apostle reminds the Christians that their love and peace would be demonstrated through psalms and music offered up to Christ. The Christian's entire life should be one of honor and praise to God. "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (v. 17, NKJ).

West is a member of Calvary Church, Newton.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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Romania provides challenges, tests of faith

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ETG RA LEXG NTCH
CRAZ, XC XL THC KHF
MHN CH PTHJ CRA
CXZAL HF CRA LAELHTL,
JRXUR CRA KECRAF RECR
BNC XT RXL HJT BHJAF.

EUCL HTA: LAOAT

Clue: N = U

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Twenty-One: Twenty-Two.

IASI, Romania (BP) — Romanian pastor Florin Vasiliu notified the mayors of Dancu and Tirgu Frumos that he would like to hold Christian meetings in their villages' public parks, in anticipation of evangelistic assistance from Romanian American Mission (RAM), a mission team comprised of American and Romanian missionaries.

Influenced by priests of area Orthodox churches who felt threatened by an evangelical presence, the mayors in these north-eastern Romanian villages declined Vasiliu's requests.

Undaunted by the fact that stray dogs seem to have more legal freedom than

evangelicals, the pastor continued his own witnessing efforts with the hope of also finding new locations to host the meetings.

Remarkably, local businessmen in both villages offered their facilities — the most unlikely of places for the meetings — bars. Not only were the bars private property, which made the meetings legitimate, they were strategically located in the middle of



SINGING PRAISES — Tirgu Frumos youth sing praise and worship songs at Romanian American Mission (RAM) open-air evangelistic meeting in Romania. (BP photo by Shannon Baker)

their respective communities.

"The locations were better than the ones we were originally targeting," said Vasiliu, pastor of Biserica Crestina Baptista Nr. 1 in Iasi, Romania. "The evangelistic meetings were held in the same places where much of the daily activity took place," he said, explaining how the evening gatherings followed a day of medical clinic ministry, home visitations, and youth/children

Bible school activities.

RAM team member Larry Baker, a New Orleans Seminary student originally from Brooklyn, N.Y., witnessed the unity and strength of the congregation when he preached a couple of sermons in their house church.

"You could really sense the love for God in these people," he said, explaining that tears streamed down their faces as

they prayed. "There was an added depth to their dedication that was very noticeable," he added.

The Bible school team experienced dramatic answers to their prayers. First, Pastor Vasiliu was led to share a devotion the next morning from the Gospel of Mark. Explaining how Jesus went from market to market, he shared how Jesus also faced harassment, fatigue and large crowds.

"You are experiencing the same thing that Jesus experienced," he encouraged. "He will give you the strength to face the day."

The challenges seemed more surmountable when team members could visual-

ize their surroundings through the eyes of Jesus. The dusty roads in the foreign land could have easily resembled the environment that he faced.

One child named Alex said in nearly perfect English, "We are having the best time." When asked later what they were most thankful for, he responded, "I am most thankful that all of you have come here today to teach us about Jesus."

Seminary student sees results on Romanian trip

BACAU, Romania (BP) — Tom Smith knew what his purpose was for going to Romania. "My job was to go and partner with the Romanian ministers for two weeks so that the work can continue once we are gone," he said.

"I wasn't there to tell them how to do ministry, but to work hand-in-hand with them and encourage them," said the New Orleans Seminary master of divinity student. Working with a team of missionaries and local church laymen affiliated with Romanian American Mission from Frankfort, Ky., Smith saw his major responsibility as discipling those with whom he was working, including 20-year-old Ovideo (Ovi) Huluba, his translator.

Smith tells of one incident that showed his efforts paid off. While shopping for souvenirs with Huluba and his fellow seminary student, Chris Latting from Greenwell Springs, La., the threesome saw two homeless street boys rummaging through a trash can. Concerned about the 90-plus degree temperatures, Smith offered the young boys his bottled water.

Latting recalled seeing the boys, who appeared to be 6 or 7 years old, the day before

from his hotel room's fifth-story balcony. "I heard some people yelling at them to scam, or whatever word they use in Romanian," he said. Now they were right in front of them. "These little guys were a sight. They had dirty clothes and dirty faces and big brown eyes."

He and Smith decided to give each boy their power bands (bracelets which used colored beads to symbolize the plan for salvation). "When we knelt down and took them off of our arms and tied them onto theirs, I thought about what Peter and John did in the temple courts," he said.

"They had no money but they did have the presence of God."

Even so, they felt helpless about communicating the bands' message to the children in their own language. Taking his cue, translator Huluba, from Bacau's Biserica Crestina Baptista, knelt down to the same level of the children, explaining what each color in the bracelet represented.

"I marveled at how well Ovi was working with the boys," Smith said. "He shared with those two little guys that God really loved them," Latting added.

In response, one of the street boys asked, "How can Jesus love me?" He overempha-



SISTERS IN CHRIST — New Orleans Seminary student Ashley Bell (center) pictured with her translator, Andreea Macoveschi (right), who Bell led in a prayer to receive Christ. On the left is Romana, a young teenager from Dancu, Romania, who Macoveschi led in the same prayer the next day during Bible school activities sponsored by Romanian American Mission (RAM). (BP photo by Susan Gannon)

sized the word "me," his body plainly indicating his disbelief.

Eager with questions, his companion pulled out pictures of Jesus, popular Eastern Orthodox icons, from his pocket. Using the pictures, Huluba explained that even though the crown of thorns was meant to mock or make fun of Jesus, he meekly took the insults and the pain.

When Huluba told the street boys that God wanted them to live with him, their eyes grew wide and they asked, "How can we live with God when he lives in heaven and we are down here?"

After Huluba explained to them how this could be possible, he told them that they didn't have to be alone on the streets, that they could ask Jesus to be with them and they could ask Jesus for food and protection.

"As I watched Ovi share Jesus' love, I was so grateful for how confident he had grown since we first met him the week before," Smith said.

Information on serving with Romanian American Mission can be obtained by contacting Wayne Ball at 1401 Cassandra Place, Brandon, MS 39042 or (601) 825-8977.



MISSIONARY HOPEFUL — Eleven-year-old Albert, who is dying from leukemia, wants to be a missionary. Pictured with his aunt, he was an asset to the many activities led by the Romania American Mission (RAM) team in Comanesti, Romania. (BP photo by Toni Whimberly)